

CONGREGAZIONE DELLA PASSIONE DI GESÙ CRISTO
P.ZA SS. GIOVANNI E PAOLO, 13
00184 ROMA – ITALIA
TEL: (39)-06.77.27.11 – FAX: (39)-06.700.8454

Il Superiore Generale

**GREETING TO THE HOLY FATHER, POPE FRANCIS
AT THE AUDIENCE WITH THE GENERAL CHAPTER CAPITULARS**

Holy Father,

As the re-elected and re-confirmed Superior General of the Passionist Congregation, I have the honor to greet you today on behalf of my brothers gathered here with great eagerness in your presence, most of whom are Capitulars participating in the 47th General Chapter of the Congregation which began on 6th October and will conclude on 27th October.

We thank you sincerely, Holy Father, for accepting to meet us in audience despite your full schedule, as we are aware also of your participation in the Synod of Bishops which is taking place at this time. Thank you for giving us the honor and privilege of spending this short time with you.

I want to assure you, Holy Father, that all our brothers in the Congregation who are keeping alive and promoting the memory of the Passion of Jesus in 63 countries, prayerfully support the Petrine ministry entrusted to you, aware of the many challenges which accompany it. In turn, we feel truly supported and strengthened by your magisterium and your humble authentic witness in living the joy of the Gospel.

In particular, we thank you for sharing your faith insights and spirituality on the mystery of the Cross of Jesus drawing us into the merciful heart of God. This has been an inspiration and has assisted us in deepening the charism and spirituality of our founder, St Paul of the Cross, who, in contemplating the Passion of Jesus experienced “*the greatest and most overwhelming work of God’s love*”.

The theme which we are reflecting on during this 47th General Chapter is: ***Renewing our Mission: Gratitude, Prophecy, Hope***. This theme is one that we want to keep before our focus and attention not only during this Chapter, but also in light of the third centenary of the foundation of our Congregation which will be commemorated in 2020. The journey and process towards this significant event of our Congregation has been launched during this General Chapter. Your strong emphasis, Holy Father, on evangelization and mission: *to proclaim the joy of the Gospel to the poor and going out on mission to the peripheries and margins* has encouraged and challenged us. However, we know that for us, Passionists, this must be centred on Christ Crucified and in relation to the crucified and suffering humanity and our earth today. Our response to the ongoing evangelical call to conversion and repentance in the mission of the kingdom of God is the path to holiness and the renewing of our selves for the fruitfulness of our mission.

It is our fervent hope that the fruits arising from our General Chapter and the commemoration of the Congregation’s Jubilee will be in response to God’s grace for our renewal as Passionists and will assist us: in deepening our commitment to keep alive the Memory of the Passion of Jesus as the ultimate expression of the love of God for all people and all creation; in finding new and contemporary ways to promote the ‘Memoria Passionis’; and in the renewal of our mission to proclaim the Gospel of the Passion in the context of today.

With eagerness to hear your words of encouragement and challenge to us, Holy Father, I end my remarks with our assurance of sincere esteem and obedience to you, and our prayers for your welfare and service in the mission of the Church. We thank you for your authenticity, courage and gentle, but firm leadership of the People of God.

On behalf of the whole Passionist Family, I humbly ask you, Holy Father, to please pray for the renewal and effectiveness of our beloved Congregation and to impart your Apostolic blessing upon us all.

“May the Passion of Jesus be always in our hearts.”

Fr Joachim Rego CP
Superior General
22 October 2018